

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

P. 9 -
Ex 992 Bar

RURAL WOMEN WORK FOR BETTER COMMUNITY LIFE

A radio talk by Miss Florence L. Hall, Extension Home Economist, Division of Cooperative Extension Work, delivered in the Home Demonstration Radio program, over a network of 50 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, October 3, 1934.

U. S. Department of Agriculture

--0000--

Good afternoon, Farm and Home Friends:

A few months ago I attended a meeting of the State Federation of Farm Women's clubs in West Virginia. Each one of these clubs devotes some time to community work. I wish you might have heard the women from all corners of that State give their reports. They told of sponsoring health clinics for children; having drinking water tested in rural homes and schools; arranging musical and dramatic programs; holding "socials" to raise money to pay the school teacher; taking turns at boarding her in many communities; sending fruits and vegetables to hospitals; providing food and clothing for needy families.

This is typical of community welfare work done by home demonstration clubs in co-operation with the extension service. Farm families have been hard pressed for ready cash. In spite of this, rural women manage to help others. Utah farm women use this slogan, "Grow your own food, feed your own family, help others in need."

Many rural clubs sponsor hot school lunches. Limited food supplies in hundreds of homes, make the school lunch problem greater than ever, these days. Warren County, Ohio, reports nine centralized schools serving complete lunches or one hot dish to supplement food brought from home. They sell at minimum cost to those able to buy, giving food to children who cannot provide money. Women's clubs contribute funds as well as canned vegetables and soup. Home demonstration clubs in Fairfax County, Virginia, canned 2000 quarts of surplus vegetables last year for school lunches.

Community-minded women are concerned about health conditions among children. The Missouri State conference of homemakers set up this standard of health achievement, "Fifty percent of club members' children under twelve years, immunized against diphtheria, or fifty percent of club members' children vaccinated against smallpox." To reach this goal in one year, Carroll County leaders first sought co-operation of health authorities. Next they directed efforts toward parents. They report, "This idea was a new one to many mothers, but the more often we hear a new idea the sooner we come to believe in it, so we discussed this plan at every club meeting. Parents and teachers became interested. A final check-up showed one hundred percent immunization of club members' children and well over fifty percent vaccination, with more than 200 additional children treated."

"What shall we do for community good times," is a question farm women answer in interesting ways. A New Mexico club, for instance, sponsors Saturday night parties for all young people in the neighborhood. Three members take charge each time, arranging games and music in winter, picnics in summer. Last year nearly one hundred folks entered into

(over)

the fun each week.

Considerable dramatic talent is coming to light among rural people. Clubs select their own plays, choose a local person as director and hold county play tournaments. Winning county plays are given at State Farm and Home Week. Anyone who has taken part in a home talent play knows how much real fun it is, how it promotes friendship and community interest. An Ohio leader says, "We enjoy getting together, getting acquainted. We have such a good time. "Judges comment on the improvement from year to year in the type of play attempted by farm groups and the growing skill of the players themselves. Altogether more than 7500 players or pageants were given last year by groups co-operating with the extension service.

Different States use various means to provide books and magazines for rural homes. Putnam County, Illinois, has a unique co-operative plan with the State library. More than 2600 volumes of the best in fiction and non-fiction are placed in eight centers in the County. These collections are shifted very four months. Smaller collections of books are provided in each rural school, changed each month by a librarian loaned to the County for one week each month.

These stories are typical of accomplishment in community improvement, made by rural women with the advice of home demonstration agents. The secret of their success is group action. One woman alone would rarely attempt to improve the school grounds, beautify the public highway, transform a tumble-down school house into an attractive community building; but ideas become realities through group effort of women working together, women who are in accord with the creed adopted by New York rural farm homemakers. Their creed runs like this: To lose self in generous enthusiasms, to believe one's community may become the best of communities, to co-operate with others for the common end of a more abundant home and community life."